

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7250

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 0297

FOLLOWING RECD FROM SAO PAULO DATED 10 JAN 75 SENT
ACTION BRASILIA INFO RIO DE JANEIRO BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO:

QUOTE

SAO PAULO 79

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, BR

SUBJECT: CARDINAL ARNS CASTS DOUBT UPON GEISEL AND GOLBERY'S
SINCERITY

REF: A. SAO PAULO 1979

B. SAO PAULO 1965

C. SAO PAULO 1032

1. DURING CONSUL GENERAL AND POLOFF'S NEW YEAR COURTESY CALL
ON SAO PAULO ARCHBISHOP PAULO EVARISTO ARNS JANUARY 7, THE
CARDINAL GAVE US, WITH AN AIR OF RESIGNATION, HIS ASSESSMENT
THAT THE GEISEL ADMINISTRATION HAD NOT MADE ANY SIGNIFICANT
PROGRESS WITH RESPECT TO RESTORING PRESS FREEDOMS OR
ELIMINATING THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY MEMBERS OF THE
NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES. IMPLICITLY, HE ALSO MADE IT PLAIN
THAT HE HAD GRAVE DOUBTS THERE WOULD BE ANY SUBSTANTIAL
IMPROVEMENT IN THESE AREAS DURING GEISEL'S TENURE. I WOULD
SAY THAT THE CARDINAL IS TOTALLY DISENCHANTED WITH THE GEISEL
GOVERNMENT AND HIS LAST ILLUSIONS HAVE VANISHED.

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2. SPECIFICALLY, THERE HAD BEEN NO RESPONSE FROM GENERAL GOLBERY WITH REGARD TO THE RESULTS OF HIS PROMISED INVESTIGATION INTO THE WHEREABOUTS AND WELFARE OF THE TWENTY-ONE INDIVIDUALS LISTED BY THE ARCHDIOCESE AS "MISSING PERSONS." NOR HAD GOLBERY COMMENTED ON THE DOSSIERS DOCUMENTING TORTURE CASES IN BRAZIL WHICH THE CARDINAL HAD HAD COLLECTED AND TRANSMITTED TO GOLBERY IN THE LATTER PART OF 1974. ARNS SAID HE HAD THE FEELING THAT THE GEISEL ADMINISTRATION WAS MAKING TOO MANY PROMISES WHICH IT COULD NOT KEEP. ON THE ONE HAND IT HAD COMMITTED ITSELF TO THE CHURCH TO REESTABLISH HUMAN RIGHTS AND EVIDENTLY HAD MADE ANOTHER CONFLICTING SET OF COMMITMENTS TO HARDLINERS WITHIN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. ASKED IF HE THOUGHT THAT TORTURE COULD GO ON WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE GOVERNMENT, ARNS SAID HE COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT GEISEL WAS UNAWARE THAT TORTURE AND OTHER ARBITRARY PRACTICES WERE STILL CONTINUING. THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT WAS NO DIFFERENT THAN ANY OTHER BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURE, HE REASONED. THERE WAS NO LEGITIMATE REASON, IN HIS VIEW, WHY GEISEL AS CHIEF OF STATE COULD NOT WORK HIS WILL ON SUBORDINATE GOVERNMENT UNITS IF HE REALLY WISHED TO TERMINATE THE ABUSES.

3. IN THE LATTER PART OF 1974 FRAGMENTARY INFORMATION HAD BEEN RECEIVED TO THE EFFECT THAT A MARRIED COUPLE WHOSE NAMES APPEARED ON THE LIST OF TWENTY-ONE HAD BEEN SEEN IN EITHER PERNAMBUCO OR MARANHÃO BUT, ARNS SAID, GOLBERY HAD NOT PROVIDED ANY FURTHER CLARIFYING INFORMATION. LIKE MANY OF THE OTHER RUMORS WHICH PROLIFERATE ALMOST DAILY WITH REGARD TO THE FATE OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS THIS ONE ALSO HAD EVAPORATED UPON CLOSER INVESTIGATION. ARNS EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT NOT ALL OF THE PERSONS ON THE MISSING PERSONS LIST WERE DEAD.

4. AS EVIDENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S UNCHANGING POLICY ON CENSORSHIP, ARNS CITED THE CASE OF THE ARCHDIOCESAN NEWSPAPER FROM WHICH AN ARTICLE WAS EXCISED BY CENSORS JUST LAST WEEK. (ALSO, AN ARCHDIOCESAN AIDE CONFIRMED TO US THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO WORD FROM THE GOVERNMENT WITH RESPECT TO GRANTING A NEW OPERATING PERMIT FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE'S RADIO STATION WHICH WAS CLOSED DOWN BY FIAT IN THE LATTER PART OF 1973.) ARNS REITERATED A KEY POINT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAVE MADE BEFORE: WITHOUT PRESS FREEDOM THERE WAS NO CHANCE FOR A REAL "POLITICAL OPENING." HE DOUBTED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD LIFT PRESS CENSORSHIP BECAUSE

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SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD INEVITABLY LEAD TO A FULL PUBLIC AIRING OF THE TORTURE CASES, WHICH HE WAS CERTAIN THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT WANT. IT WAS TRUE, THE CARDINAL ACKNOWLEDGED, THAT O ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO WAS NOT UNDERGOING CENSORSHIP AT THE PRESENT MOMENT, BUT ESTADO DIRECTOR JULIO MESQUITA HAD TOLD HIM ON JANUARY 3 THAT THIS WAS ONLY A TEMPORARY RESPITE IN CONNECTION WITH THE PAPER'S CELEBRATION OF ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY. ARNS PRODUCED A BITTERSWEET SMILE AT OUR MENTION OF O ESTADO'S

CRUSADE FOR PRESS FREEDOMS. HE RECOUNTED A RECENT INTERVIEW BETWEEN A LOS ANGELES TIMES REPORTER AND MESQUITA IN WHICH THE REPORTER ASKED ABOUT THE LIST OF TWENTY-ONE MISSING PERSONS. MESQUITA TOLD ARNS HE HAD DISMISSED THE MISSING PERSON STORY AS BEING UNTRUE. ARNS OFFERED TO GIVE MESQUITA DETAILED DOCUMENTATION CONCERNING THESE CASES AND ASSURED THE PUBLISHER THAT THE PERSONS WERE IN FACT MISSING. SUCH ARE THE PERNICIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF THE GOVERNMENT'S CENSORSHIP POLICY, ARNS CONCLUDED, THAT THE DIRECTOR OF THE ONLY NEWSPAPER IN BRAZIL WILLING TO STAND UP TO THE GOVERNMENT ON THE ISSUE HAS HIMSELF UNKNOWINGLY FALLEN VICTIM TO THE FALSE PICTURE WHICH IS THE END PRODUCT OF SUCH A SYSTEM.

5. COMMENTING BRIEFLY ON THE OUTCOME OF THE NOVEMBER 15

ELECTIONS, THE CARDINAL EXPRESSED REGRET THAT A FINE PUBLIC SERVANT SUCH AS SENATOR CARVALHO PINTO, WHO HAD INTENDED TO RETIRE AT THE END OF HIS CURRENT MANDATE, HAD BEEN PERSUADED AGAINST HIS BETTER JUDGMENT AND PERSONAL WISHES TO RUN FOR REELECTION FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOVERNMENT PARTY AND HAD GONE DOWN TO AN IGNOMINIOUS DEFEAT THROUGH NO FAULT OF HIS OWN. CONCOMITANTLY, AN UNPREPARED MAN SUCH AS QUERCIA WOULD NOT HAVE WON HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR MASSIVE POPULAR DISCONTENT WITH THE ECONOMIC SITUATION AND WITH ARBITRARY NATURE AND POLICIES OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT.

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6. ON AN UNRELATED SUBJECT:, ARNS EXPRESSED DISMAY AT SECRETARY KISSINGER'S RECENT REMARKS TO BUSINESS WEEK IN WHICH HE DID NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF THE USE OF FORCE IF THE ACTIONS OF THE OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES LED TO EXTREME SITUATIONS. ARNS INTERPRETED THE SECRETARY'S COMMENTS AS A DELIBERATE, PROVOCATIVE THREAT INTENDED TO IMPOSE THE WILL AND SUPERIOR MIGHT OF THE US ON THE OIL PRODUCERS. DESPITE OUR EXPLANATION AND JUSTIFICATIONS OF THE SECRETARY'S REMARKS, ARNS STUCK TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH THAT WAR OR THE THREAT OF WAR WAS UNACCEPTABLE INSTRUMENT OF STATECRAFT IN THE MODERN ERA.

7. COMMENT: WE FIND THE CARDINAL'S CRITICISM OF THE GEISEL ADMINISTRATION TO BE PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT WITH RESPECT TO THE PROSPECTS FOR CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN BRAZIL BECAUSE THEY COME AT A TIME WHEN OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE COUNTRY INTERESTED IN REDEMOCRATIZATION CONTINUE TO PRAISE PRESIDENT GEISEL FOR THE NEW HORIZONS APPEARING TO HAVE BEEN OPENED AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT FREE ELECTIONS WHICH WERE PERMITTED TO TAKE PLACE AND HAVE BEEN RESPECTED BY THE GOVERNMENT. WHILE IN PAST CONVERSATIONS WITH US ARNS HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF GEISEL ADMINISTRATION ACTIONS OR INACTIONS, HIS CENSURE USUALLY HAS BEEN A REACTION TO A SPECIFIC EVENT WHICH HAS DISMAYED OR ANGERED HIM. HIS LATEST COMMENTS WERE MORE IN THE VEIN OF A COLD, REALISTIC OVERALL APPRAISAL OF
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WHERE THE GEISEL ADMINISTRATION IS AT AFTER ALMOST NINE MONTHS IN OFFICE. PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY, THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME ARNS HAS ADMITTED TO US A DISBELIEF IN THE SINCERITY OF GEISEL AND GOLBERY WHEN THEY ASSERT THE INTENTION OF REESTABLISHING A RULE OF LAW AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. HERETOFORE, ARNS HAD TAKEN THE VIEW, AT LEAST WITH US, THAT WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION ULTIMATELY MIGHT BE UNSUCCESSFUL IN REINING IN THE INTERNAL SECURITY APPARATUS, IT SINCERELY WISHED TO DO SO.

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UNQUOTE
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